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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [CH](#) [HK](#)  
SUBJECT: CODEL PELOSI MEETING WITH MARTIN LEE

REF: (A) HONG KONG 984 (B) HONG KONG 945 (C) HONG  
KONG 931

Classified By: Consul General Joe Donovan for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Veteran democratic politician Martin Lee warned CODEL Pelosi May 30 that Beijing was "reneging" on its promises of elections by universal suffrage, Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong, and a high degree of autonomy in matters specified in the Basic Law. He said Hong Kong people take courage from statements by the U.S. government and the international community, which reassure them Hong Kong is not alone. He also urged the CODEL to reinstate the Hong Kong Policy Act Report and to maintain funding for Radio Free Asia's Cantonese Service. Lee also suggested that China would use the DPRK issue as a bargaining chip, potentially to keep the United States from pressing too hard on human rights issues. Speaker Pelosi and her colleagues reassured Lee the Congress remains concerned about Hong Kong and human rights in China, noting upcoming Congressional observances of the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. End summary.

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One SAR, Two Teams  
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12. (C) At a breakfast meeting May 30, former legislator and founding member of the Democratic Party (DPHK) Martin Lee told Speaker Pelosi things were "not going well" in Hong Kong. The central government has no intention of granting real democracy in 2017, Lee argued, and will use a Beijing-controlled nomination process to prevent democrats for standing in elections by universal suffrage for Chief Executive (CE). Lee contends the Legislative Council's (LegCo) sectorally-elected Functional Constituencies (FCs) are clearly incompatible with the Basic Law's commitment to eventual election of the entire legislature by universal suffrage. However, Beijing is "reneging" on that commitment, and looking for a pretext by which to keep the FCs in some form.

13. (C) A new threat, Lee continued, was revealed in a January 2008 Central Party School journal article by Central Government Liaison Office (CGLO) Research Department head Cao Erbao. Lee told the CODEL Cao's article reveals the role of the CGLO as the head a "second governing team," with Hong Kong's representatives in the PRC National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) now to play an active role in Hong Kong affairs. (Note: Our assessment of this issue was reported ref C. End note.) CE Donald Tsang "hates" this article, Lee said, because it makes public what people already know, causing him to lose face.

14. (C) Hong Kong people have long felt "all important policy decisions are made in Western (CGLO offices) and implemented in Central (Hong Kong Government)." In the past, this was done quietly: Lee reported Beijing orchestration and support

for pro-Beijing candidates in Hong Kong elections. He further charged that Beijing coopted former democrats who had fallen on hard economic times or other difficulties to run against other democrats, presumably to split the democratic vote. With Cao's article, Lee averred, Beijing "now wants to make it official." "In Macau, they are already doing it," Lee alleged (see ref B).

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Democracy Delayed  
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15. (C) The Speaker noted she had spoken out at LegCo (ref A) in support of the Hong Kong Government's commitment to begin the next phase of consultation on political reform by the end of 2009. Regarding the process of political reform as a done deal set by Beijing, Lee said the consultations "will be a complete waste of time." Even then, he said, they delayed them anyway, dismissing the argument of the poor economy as the "most stupid" reason to do so. The Speaker asked whether elections by universal suffrage would make Hong Kong more democratic. It is possible, Lee allowed, but Beijing's intention is to maintain control of LegCo and the CE.

16. (C) Lee summarized the frustration of the democrats. No democrat would declare independence, not only because the PLA are already in Hong Kong, but more importantly, because the people of Hong Kong would not support it. Since a democratic government can only function with the support of the people, it would be useless for a pan-democratic CE candidate to fight with Beijing. We know Beijing is in charge, he concluded, but we want Beijing to keep its promises vis-a-vis

HONG KONG 00000985 002 OF 003

Hong Kong's autonomy, democratic development and one country, two systems.

17. (C) Representatives Inslee and Markey asked Lee for his views of Beijing's ultimate goals, and what might happen in 2020. The central government believed that ten years of Chinese rule would allow them to win the hearts of the Hong Kong people, Lee told the CODEL. Thus, the first ten years of progressive democratic development were mapped out in the Basic Law. When events like the 2003 march suggested to Beijing it was not reaching that goal, however, Beijing began a series of delays for universal suffrage. Beijing agreed to a last-minute push from the UK for democratic elections in Hong Kong, Lee concluded, because it believed it could guarantee results to its own liking. That remains its goal.

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Comforting Words  
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18. (C) The Speaker asked how the Congress could be of help. Meeting me is a statement, Lee said, one which the CGLO will not like. He recounted efforts by PRC officials to prevent his being met by world leaders or being granted awards, noting dryly they seemed most effective on the UK government. Lee also asked the Speaker to make a statement to the press prior to her departure (Note: The Speaker proposed instead to release a statement on her return to Washington. End note.) Hong Kong people draw courage from statements of support from abroad, Lee told the CODEL, because they reassure Hong Kong it is not alone. He emphasized the importance of a 2003 White House statement on Hong Kong's Article 23 Bill in helping to mobilize the 500,000 people who took to the street in protest against the C.H. Tung administration on July 1 that year. Lee also stressed the importance of maintaining Radio Free Asia's Cantonese service, for Hong Kong but also listeners in Guangdong province.

19. (C) Emphasizing the bipartisan interest in these issues, Rep. Sensenbrenner noted he and the Speaker aimed to maintain a steady pattern of public statements on issues like Tibet and Hong Kong. While Beijing will do what it wants,

Sensenbrenner told Lee, they hope the statements may affect Beijing's timing and level of success. Lee noted the phasing out of the Hong Kong Policy Act Reports; the CODEL told Lee these reports would be restored in legislation currently under consideration in the Congress.

¶10. (C) Observing that religion seemed to be an "Achilles heel" for Beijing, Rep. Sensenbrenner asked Lee if a statement by the CODEL should mention religious freedom. Lee did not specifically cite the issue as a concern for Hong Kong, although he had earlier mentioned concerns that the restrictive 2003 Article 23 Bill represented then-leader Jiang Zemin's attempt to stop Falun Gong in Hong Kong. Lee did observe that while newly-installed Bishop Tong eschewed now-retired Cardinal Zen's "high profile", he was nonetheless "firm" on the issues. Lee also opined that the Vatican had mishandled its letter to Chinese Catholics, since giving an advance copy to Beijing allowed the government to frame the discussion within China to its liking before the Vatican spoke publicly.

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June 4  
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¶11. (C) Lee predicted Hong Kong's commemorations of June 4 would enjoy a "huge turnout," fueled in great part by the release of Zhao Ziyang's memoirs. Zhao's recounting of decisions regarding responses to the student protests taken without regard to established procedures were a "strong indictment" of both Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng. Lee joked that he was actually hoping for rain June 4, since a big turnout in heavy rain made a much more powerful statement. He recalled a 1989 march which organizers had proceeded with despite a Number 8 Typhoon Warning (which normally closes schools and workplaces). Despite modest flooding in the area in front of the CGLO building (then the New China News Agency), Lee recalled protesters were willing both to sit down and lower their umbrellas so they could all be seen.

¶12. (C) The Speaker told Lee Congress would move a resolution on June 4. It would also hold a rally on the Capitol grounds and stage an exhibition in the lobby of the Rayburn House Office Building. The CODEL raised human rights issues with President Hu, Premier Wen, and NPC Head Wu Bangguo, receiving the usual "dialogue not confrontation, don't interfere in our internal affairs" response.

¶13. (C) Lee asked about the Obama Administration's policy on  
HONG KONG 00000985 003 OF 003

China, and the CODEL noted the number of crises now competing for the President's attention. Lee suggested that the Chinese would use North Korea, where he feels the PRC has considerable influence, as a bargaining chip against U.S. China policy in areas Beijing dislikes. On the other hand, he feels Beijing's purchase of U.S. debt gives it an even greater stake in the United States' economic recovery.

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Participants  
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¶14. (U) U.S. Participants:

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Mr. Paul Pelosi  
Consul General Joseph Donovan  
Rep. Edward Markey and Dr. Susan Blumenthal  
Rep. James Sensenbrenner and Mrs. Cheryl Sensenbrenner  
Rep. Earl Blumenauer  
Rep. Jay Inslee and Mrs. Trudi Inslee  
Professional Staff Members to the Speaker and Representatives

(U) Hong Kong Participants:

Martin Lee, former LegCo member; founding member, Democratic Party of Hong Kong

¶15. (U) CODEL Pelosi did not have the opportunity to clear this message before departing.

DONOVAN